AVATAR

The Last Airbender

Show #115

BOOK ONE: WATER
CHAPTER FIFTEEN: "Bato of the Water Tribe"

Written by

Ian Wilcox

as broadcast Draft
September 21, 2005

ACT ONE

EXT. WOODED HILLSIDE - DAY

CLOSE ON: An exquisitely crafted whale's tooth scimitar, lying on the ground. Aang picks it up.

AANG
Hey look -- a sword made out of a whale's tooth.

Sokka snatches the weapon from Aang.

SOKKA
Let me see that!

Sokka scrutinizes the weapon. Off a design on the hilt, we...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

SOKKA'S MEMORY

A similar weapon, being worn by a Water Tribe warrior. At the South Pole, Water Tribe warriors load equipment onto their boats. A YOUNG SOKKA (about 13) watches them.

BACK TO SCENE

SOKKA
This is a Water Tribe weapon! See if you can find anything else.

The boys pace across the clearing, seeking more clues as Katara steps from the woods with a basket of berries.

KATARA
Did someone lose something?

AANG
No! We found something!

Sokka finds a singed arrow and picks it up.

SOKKA
(re: arrow)
It's burned.

He rubs soot from the arrow, then notices a tree with scorch-marks. Sokka starts putting the clues together.

SOKKA (cont'd)
There was a battle... Water Tribe warriors ambushed a group of Firebenders. The Firebenders fought back, but the warriors drove them down this hill...

Sokka takes off through the trees. Katara and Aang follow, trying to keep up.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Sokka steps from the woods onto a beach -- he stops.

AANG
So then what happened?

SOKKA
I don't know. The trail ends here.

KATARA
Wait, look!

She points up the beach toward a WATER TRIBE SHIP!

SOKKA
It's one of our boats!

EXT. WATER TRIBE SHIP - MOMENTS LATER

The kids circle the beached vessel.

KATARA
Is this... Dad's boat?

SOKKA
No, but it's from his fleet. Dad was here.

INT. ZUKO'S ROOM - DAY

Uncle Iroh pours Zuko a cup of tea. Then he takes in the aroma from his own cup, sips, and swallows.

UNCLE
Ahh! See, Prince Zuko? A moment of quiet is good for your mental well-being.

Zuko raises his cup to his lips and - CRASH! The whole cabin rocks, spilling tea all over him, making his ponytail droop.

ZUKO
(ANNOYED ANGRY SOUND)

SHOUTS and GROWLS come from above deck, as they head for the door...

EXT. ZUKO'S SHIP - PORT - DAY

The whole crew has stopped cold. At center deck stands a huge and loathsome beast: a SHIRSHU! Its mole-like face lacks eyes, but has three writhing snouts. It ferociously claws at the metal decking. Mounted on the creature's back is a beautiful but tough looking woman -- JUNE. She brandishes her whip.

JUNE
Get back! We're after a stowaway.

ZUKO
There are no stowaways on my ship!

The beast rips through the deck, sending an iron panel flying across the ship, scattering Zuko's men. The beast shoves its head into the hole.

SHIRSHU'S POV

This is a highly stylized POV shot of a creature that "sees" with its sense of smell. Its view of reality is like a black and white pointillist painting, in which only the scent of the thing it is tracking appears in a bright color. In this case, it follows a bright green trail -- which leads to an intense bright green image of its intended prey: a fuzzy, human-shaped burst of greens, a STOWAWAY!

NORMAL POV

The stowaway scrambles to evade the Shirshu. The stowaway climbs from his hiding place out onto the deck.

EXT. ZUKO'S SHIP - DAY

The frightened stowaway begins to flee, but the beast lashes out with its hideous tongue, which SLAPS the fugitive's neck. He freezes up, and loses muscle control, collapsing immediately. He lies limp and helpless, but still moves his eyes around. June dismounts.

ZUKO
He's paralyzed.

JUNE
Only temporarily. The toxins will wear off in about an hour. But by then, he'll be in jail and I'll have my money.

She loads his limp body onto the beast's saddle.

ZUKO
But how did you find him on my ship?

JUNE
My Shirshu can smell a rat a continent away.

Zuko looks intrigued. June climbs onto her beast.

UNCLE
Well, I'm impressed.

She CRACKS her whip and the creature bounds off the ship. Uncle raises an eyebrow and smiles suggestively.

UNCLE (cont'd)
Very impressed.

EXT. WATER TRIBE SHIP - LATER

Katara, Aang, Appa and Momo are now asleep. Sokka is still awake, messing with the smoldering remains of the fire.

SOKKA'S MEMORY

Young Sokka, in wolf's battle make-up (like 1.02), trudges toward one of the boats, overloaded with soldier's gear and equipment that is too big and heavy for him. Sokka's father, HAKODA, is loading the ship with BATO, another warrior. Hakoda turns and sees his son approaching. He signals Bato that he needs a moment alone -- Bato nods and leaves.

HAKODA
(sympathetic)
Sokka...

YOUNG SOKKA
I'm coming with you.

HAKODA
You're not old enough to go to war, Sokka. You know that.

YOUNG SOKKA
I’m strong, I’m brave, I can fight. Please, Dad!

HAKODA
Being a man is knowing where you’re needed the most. And for you, right now, that’s here protecting your sister.

Tears well up in Sokka and Hakoda’s eyes. Sokka fights to hold back the tears.

YOUNG SOKKA
I don’t understand.

HAKODA
Some day you will.
(beat)
I’m going to miss you so much.

They hug, as Sokka SOBS.

A loud RUSTLING SOUND and we...

SMASH CUT TO:

BACK TO SCENE

The rustling sound is in the present, and Sokka is startled from his reverie into a state of extreme alertness. He looks around and listens... more RUSTLING.

SOKKA
Who’s there?

Bato, the warrior from Sokka’s memory, approaches their camp.

BATO
Sokka?

SOKKA
Bato?!

Aang and Katara wake up.

AANG
(groggy)
Who the what now?

Katara rubs her eyes clear and then sees who it is.

KATARA
Bato!

BATO
Sokka! Katara!

Katara and Sokka excitedly run over and hug him.

BATO (cont'd)
It is so good to see you two.
You've grown so much.

AANG
Hi, I'm Aang.

He waves, but is ignored.

SOKKA/ KATARA
Where's Dad? / Is he here?

BATO
No. He and the other warriors
should be in the eastern Earth
Kingdom by now.

The kids wilt a little at this. A blast of cold ocean wind hits the group.

BATO (cont'd)
This is no place for a reunion.
Let's get inside.

Bato leads the kids away, leaving Aang standing alone. Aang trudges after them.

EXT. ABBEY - NIGHT

Bato leads the kids to a rustic gate. He pushes it open and they enter a well kept courtyard. Robed, short-haired, eastern-style NUNS glide in silent business. The kids trail Bato.

BATO
After I was wounded, your father
carried me to this abbey, the
sisters have cared for me ever
since.

They stop before a stately nun. Her dress is a bit more adorned than the others. This is the SUPERIOR.

BATO (cont'd)
Superior, these are Hakoda's children. They've been traveling with the Avatar. I found them by my boat.

SUPERIOR
Young Avatar, it gives me great joy to be in your presence. Welcome to our abbey.

AANG
Thank you. It's truly an honor to be here. If there's anything--

She indicates Sokka and Katara, again leaving out Aang. Katara sniffs the air.

KATARA
What smells so good, Bato?

BATO
The sisters craft ointments and perfumes.

SOKKA
(joking)
Perfume? Maybe we can dump some on Appa -- because he stinks so much, am I right?

Sokka's joke meets with dead silence.

BATO
You have your father's wit.

INT. BATO'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Bato opens the door and the kids enter a cottage made out exactly like the inside of a Water Tribe hut!

KATARA
Bato! It looks like home!

SOKKA
Everything's here, even the pelts!

Aang and Momo look at the various animal pelts, horrified.

AANG
Yeah, nothing’s cozier than dead animal skins.

Momo stares at the face on a bear skin rug. He hisses and bats its nose, then leaps into Aang’s arms. Katara sniffs a bubbling pot.

KATARA
No way... stewed sea prunes?

BATO
Help yourself!

Sokka and Katara spoon it out. Aang takes a whiff and cringes as Momo scarfs down a fistful. He almost heaves it up. Sokka, Katara and Bato sit, Water Tribe style, on the rugs strewn across the room. They dig into their sea prunes.

SOKKA
Dad could eat a whole barrel of these things.

KATARA
Bato, is it true you and Dad lassoed an arctic hippo?

BATO
It was your father’s idea, he just dragged me along. Well, the hippo did the dragging!

AANG
I ride animals too! One time there was this giant eel, and I--

SOKKA
(ignoring Aang, interrupting)
So who was it that came up with the great blubber fiasco?

BATO
You knew about that?

KATARA
Everyone does!

AANG
What’s that story?

SOKKA
It’s a long one, Aang. Some other time.

Aang, shut down, looks over the weapons collected on Bato’s wall. He toys with one.

KATARA
You and Dad had so many hilarious adventures.

BATO
Not all of which were hilarious at the time. But everything’s funny with hindsight.
(chuckles, then stops abruptly)
Aang -- please put that down. It’s ceremonial and very fragile.

Sokka and Katara stare at Aang, embarrassed. He gently puts the weapon back. Bato, Sokka and Katara chatter away as Aang finds a seat in a shadowy corner. He slumps in it, unnoticed. (Action occurs during the following...)

SOKKA
Was it you or dad that put an octopus on your head and convinced Gran-Gran you were a water spirit?

BATO
Your dad wore the octopus, but I did the spooky voice.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

This is a tough, seedy place -- the Avatar equivalent of a biker bar. June is arm wrestling a big scary dude. Around them a crowd of hulking spectators cheer them on rowdily.

ZUKO (O.S.)
Out of my way! Step aside, filth.

We see Zuko rudely shove people aside, trying to make his way through the crowd. Uncle apologizes to Zuko’s victims.

UNCLE
He means no offense, I’m certain you bathe regularly.

Zuko reaches June, still locked in her arm wrestling bout.

ZUKO
I need to talk to you!

JUNE
Well if it isn't my new friends,
Angry Boy and Uncle Lazy.

UNCLE
(CHUCKLES)--

Zuko shoots him a look and he abruptly stops laughing. Just then, June wins her bout, smashing her opponent's arm down.

CROWD
(CHEERS)

ZUKO
Your beast trashed my ship! You have to pay me back.

People toss their coins and cash onto the table, in front of June. She rakes the money into a huge pile.

JUNE
Love to help you out, but I'm a little short on money.
(announcing to crowd)
Drinks on me!

CROWD/ UNCLE
(CHEERS)

ZUKO
Money isn't what I had in mind.

EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Katara's lost necklace. It swings from Zuko's hand. As June eyes its shimmering facets, she leans against her PURRING Shirshu. It's hitched like a horse outside a saloon.

ZUKO
I need you to find someone.

JUNE
What happened, your girlfriend run off on you?

ZUKO
It's not the girl I'm after -- it's the bald monk she's travelling with.

JUNE
(raising an eyebrow)
Whatever you say.

ZUKO
If you find them, I'll consider the damage to my ship paid for.

JUNE
Pff, forget it.

UNCLE
Plus we'll pay your weight in gold.

JUNE
Make it <u>your</u> weight, and we got a deal.

UNCLE
(LAUGHS) You got it.

She takes the necklace. June swats the Shirshu's saddle with her whip.

JUNE
(to Zuko and Uncle)
Get on!

Uncle climbs the massive saddle, then pulls up his nephew. June crouches before the vile beast, and holds Katara's necklace to its writhing snout. The creature SNORTS.

SHIRSHU'S POV

Again the monster's olfactory vision is seen. The necklace shimmers in pointillist sparks of orange. The beast looks to the vast sky. One or two sparks of orange find their way to its snout.

EXT. TAVERN - SAME TIME

The scent of the necklace breathes life into the Shirshu. June scrambles into the saddle, takes the reigns and with a flick: The beast lets out a SHRIEK that jolts Uncle and Zuko. It lunges into the night in a cloud of dust. The hunt is on!

INT. BATO'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Aang is slumped in the corner, DOZING. Sokka and Katara finish the last of their meal.

BATO
There’s something I should tell you kids. I’m expecting a message from your father.

Katara and Sokka are excited.

KATARA
Really?!

SOKKA
When?!

Aang is startled awake, and listens in.

BATO
Any day now. Your father said he’d send a message when they found a rendezvous point.

Bato stands and stokes the fire. Aang leans in to hear more.

BATO (cont’d)
If you wait here until the message arrives, you can come with me and see your father again.

SOKKA
It’s been over two years since we’ve seen Dad -- that would be so incredible! Katara?

He and Bato look to Katara. Aang also waits on her answer -- would they really leave me?

KATARA
I do really miss him...
(smiles)
It would be great to see Dad.

Aang’s hope is dashed. He gets up, quietly opens the door and slips out, unnoticed.

BATO
It’s been far too long, hasn’t it? I’m not sure when word will arrive, but when it does...

EXT. BATO’S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Aang stands on Bato’s stoop. Momo flutters down for attention but gets nothing. Aang steps into the night air.

The moon-lit road stretches before him and he aimlessly follows it.

INT. BATO'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

The kids still haven't noticed that Aang has left.

SOKKA
It would be great, but we can't. We have to take Aang to the North Pole first.

KATARA
Even if we had time to wait for the message, who knows how far we'd have to travel. We don't have time for a long detour.

BATO
I'm sure your father would understand and be proud that his children are helping the Avatar.

EXT. WATER TRIBE SHIP - LATER

Aang is perched on the edge of the ship, depressed.

AANG
I can't believe they would leave me.

There's a galloping SPLASH as an ostrich-rider strides around the boat! A fatigued MESSENGER sits atop the panting creature.

MESSENGER
(gruffly)
I'm looking for Bato of the Water Tribe.

AANG
I - I know Bato.

The messenger snaps open a satchel. He pulls out a tightly rolled scroll, and gives it to Aang.

MESSENGER
Make sure he gets this!

The messenger rides off. Aang looks after him, then down at the scroll. He pulls it open. Inside is the map to the Water Tribe's rendezvous point! Aang is wide eyed as Momo peeks.

AANG
It’s the map to Sokka and Katara’s dad.

Aang looks from the map to Momo then back to the map. A resolve comes over him. Momo lets out a sad little GROAN as: Aang CRUMPLES UP the map!

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BATO'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Aang, once again, stands by the stoop to Bato's home. He peers into the window where he sees everyone still talking. He goes in.

INT. BATO'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

AANG
Hey everyone! Sorry I was gone so long.

KATARA
Hey Aang, I didn't notice you left.

AANG
(nervous)
Yep, but now I'm back -- sure could go for some delicious sea prunes!

Aang takes a bowl and spoons out some of his despised dish. He spoons some in his mouth, trying to keep a happy face.

AANG (cont'd)
(forced)
Mmm!

Katara and Sokka look mildly concerned at their friend's strange behavior.

EXT. ABANDONED CITY RUINS - DAWN

The ancient HERBALIST picks herbs and weeds growing among the ruins. Her loyal cat purrs at her feet. The ruins shake. The cat cowers by the old woman. The Shirshu lurches into the ruins with Zuko, Uncle and June on its back.

HERBALIST
Out for a bit of fresh air are we?

ZUKO
We're looking for someone.

HERBALIST
I hope it's not Miyuki.
(to her cat)
Miyuki, did you get in trouble with the Fire Nation again?

The cat MEOWS in response.

JUNE
The Avatar’s been through here.
Let’s keep moving.

She cracks her whip. Uncle bites his lip . The herbalist looks to Uncle.

EXT. ABBEY STABLES - MORNING

Aang hauls hay over to Appa. When he drops it, the crumpled map slips from his tunic and drifts to the ground. As Aang races for it the Superior rounds the corner and picks it up.

SUPERIOR
Aha, I caught you! You should be ashamed of yourself...

Aang looks at the nun, full of fear and guilt.

SUPERIOR (cont’d)
Littering in the courtyard.

She hands the crumpled map to Aang.

AANG
I’m sorry. I’ll take care of this.

He tucks it away and bows.

EXT. WATER TRIBE SHIP - MORNING

Bato and the kids approach his ship. As they step around the boat, Aang sees the tracks left by the ostrich-rider the night before. He does some quick Airbending that kicks up the sand and dissolves the tracks.

BATO
This ship is sentimental to me. It was built by my father.

SOKKA
Is this the boat he took you ice dodging in?

Bato indicates a long scar on the hull.

BATO
Yep, it’s got the scar to prove it. How about you, Sokka? You must have some good stories from your first time ice dodging.

Sokka looks a bit sad and shrugs.

KATARA
He never got to go. Dad left before he was old enough.

BATO
Oh... I forgot you were too young.

AANG
What’s ice dodging?

BATO
It’s a rite of passage for young Water Tribe members. When you turn fourteen, your dad takes you...

He looks at Sokka.

BATO (cont’d)
You know what, you’re about to find out.

EXT. MAKAPU VILLAGE - DAY

As inhabitants chip at the lava that threatened their homes, the Shirshu claws its way over the lava flows sending villagers scrambling. The drooling beast makes its way to Aunt Wu’s fortune salon where Aunt Wu is waiting at the door.

ZUKO
Why are we stopping?

JUNE
Because the girl must have spent a lot of time here.

Zuko looks annoyed as the beast sniffs all around.

ZUKO
(impatient)
We have no time for this!

Zuko grabs Katara’s necklace from June and shoves it against the Shirshu’s snout. The beast recoils and shoots its tongue at Zuko! The prince barely dodges the tongue as it SPLATS against Aunt Wu’s hut.

ZUKO (cont’d)
Hey, watch it!

JUNE
Aw look, he likes you.

She soothes the Shirshu. As it sniffs Katara's necklace, Aunt Wu looks up at Uncle.

AUNT WU
Care to hear your fortune, handsome?

UNCLE
At my age there's really only one big surprise left, and I'd just as soon leave it a mystery.

June CRACKS her whip - the beast is off in a rumble of dust.

EXT. SEA ROCKS - DAY

The ship traces the shore line at a good distance, carried along by current. Bato and the kids enjoy the ride.

BATO
(to Aang)
Ice dodging is a ceremonial test of wisdom, bravery, and trust. In our village it was done by weaving a boat through a field of icebergs.

SOKKA
How are we suppose to ice dodge without ice?

BATO
You'll be dodging those!

Bato points down shore. A distant cluster of jagged rocks rises from a torrent of white water. Powerful current pounds through the stone maze and hulks of wrecked ships are strewn against the rocky sides. The kids are wide-eyed as Bato aims the boat for the deadly cluster.

BATO (cont'd)
Sokka, you steer and call the shots -- lead wisely. Katara, you secure the main sail. The winds can be brutal -- so be brave. Aang, you control the jib. Without your steady hand, we all go down -- your position is about trust.

AANG
(defensive)
I know that! Why wouldn't I know that? I'm the Avatar. I know about trust.

The roar and pull of the current grows and the kids take their positions. Bato sits to the side.

BATO
For this to be done right I cannot help. You pass or fail on your own.

With that the ship slams into a torrent of waves. Everyone is wrenched to port. Sokka leans on the rudder.

SOKKA
Aang! Ease up on the jib! Katara, steady!

They blast between rocks and are greeted by more rocky maze.

SOKKA (cont'd)
Aang! Less sail! Katara give him room!

Katara leans back and Aang shifts his sail. The boat glides past lethal rocks and is broadsided by a rush of water. Bato is nearly washed away but he holds tight. Just then Sokka sees a blade of rock cutting the waves in front of them. Just beyond is a wall of stone!

SOKKA (cont'd)
Aang! Helm to lee! Helm to lee!

AANG
What does that even mean?!

Sokka points left and Aang darts to the ship's other side. Sokka pulls on the rudder and the boat skirts between rocky blade and stone wall.

SOKKA
Great job!

The boat hits a swell of quiet water. This gives just a beat to see the next horror: A row of rocky teeth stretch from one canyon wall to the next - no way through. The ship careens towards it.

KATARA
There's no way through!

SOKKA
We can make it!

BATO
(worried)
Sokka, you've already proven yourself, maybe we should--

SOKKA
Aang, I'm going to need air in that sail! Katara, I want you to bend as much water as you can between us and those rocks.

The boat lunges at the row of rocks, almost on top of them.

SOKKA (cont'd)
Now!

Aang and Katara perform their bending moves as the boat plunges toward the rocks. The tactic works! A blast of air fills the sail and a deep swell of water lifts the boat over the rocks! Bato is in awe. The ship slaps down on the other side, and glides into quiet waters as everyone collapses, exhausted.

EXT. SHORE LINE - LATER

The worn out kids are assembled in front of the boat. Bato mixes a small dish of cuttlefish paint. Bato dips his thumb then draws a rune on Sokka's forehead.

BATO
The spirits of water bear witness to these marks. For Sokka: the mark of the wise. The same mark your father earned.

Bato turns to Katara and draws a different rune on her.

BATO (cont'd)
For Katara: mark of the brave. Your courage inspires us.

Now Bato turns to Aang and draws a rune over his blue arrow.

BATO (cont'd)
For Aang: the mark of the trusted. You are now an honorary member of the Water Tribe.

Aang steps back.

AANG
I can't.

KATARA
Of course you can!

Bato lifts Aang’s downcast face and draws the mark.

AANG
No...

He steps away and smears the mark off his forehead.

AANG (cont’d)
You can’t trust me.

KATARA
Aang, what are you talking about?

Aang reaches into his smock and pulls out the crumpled map. He hands the paper wad to Katara and she opens it up.

AANG
A messenger gave this to me for Bato.

As Aang speaks, Katara realizes what it is and a stunned look comes over her.

AANG (cont’d)
You have to understand. I was afraid you would--

Sokka snatches it away and sees what it is.

SOKKA
This is the map to our father! You had it the whole time? How could you?

Aang looks down, silently.

SOKKA (cont’d)
Well, you can go to the North Pole on your own.
(to Katara and Bato)
I’m going to find Dad.

Aang is crushed.

BATO
Now Sokka, I think you should--

SOKKA
Katara, are you with me?

Katara has been silent all this time. Now everyone turns to her. She looks at the crestfallen Aang -- then nods.

KATARA
I’m with you, Sokka.

Aang wilts.

END ACT TWO

ACT III

EXT. ABBEY COURTYARD - DAY

Sokka, Katara and Bato load supplies into backpacks for their trip. The Superior and sisters help. All work in silence. A forlorn Aang is perched on Appa's head, watching from across the courtyard.

Bato, Katara and Sokka all bow to the Superior then make for the gate. Katara turns, and marches up to Aang.

KATARA
Good luck.

AANG
Okay. You too.

She turns back and joins her brother and Bato. The group climbs a sloping path out of the abbey and into the woods. The sisters turn and look at Aang.

AANG (cont'd)
Guess I should be moving on.

SUPERIOR
(coolly)
That would be best.

Aang tugs at Appa. The bison, Momo and the Avatar all step from the courtyard. Aang looks back as the sisters close the gate. It shuts with a chilly CLANG. Aang looks to the empty road his friends took, then he heads in the other direction.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WATER TRIBE SHIP - DAY

Aang is perched on the edge of the boat.

AANG
I'm an idiot, Momo.

EXT. ABBEY COURTYARD - DAY

The sisters are busy filling bottles from their giant casks of perfume. The bottles begin to RATTLE. With a ferocious ROAR the Shirshu pushes open the gate! It stalks into the abbey with Zuko, Uncle and June on its back. June dismounts before the Superior and holds Katara's necklace to the Shirshu's snout.

SHIRSHU'S POV

The necklace glows with points of orange. And where Katara's trail was once a faint orange point here and there, it is now a blazing orange path leading up the road.

EXT. ABBEY COURTYARD - SAME TIME

JUNE
We're getting close.

The Shirshu SHRIEKS and reels around. June leaps to the saddle just as it bolts from the courtyard. The Superior and sisters watch it tear up the sloping path and into the woods.

EXT. WOODED PATH - DAY

Sokka, Katara and Bato trudge through the forest. From a distant hilltop they hear the lonesome HOWL of a wolf. It resonates through the valley.

KATARA
That wolf sounds so sad.

SOKKA
It's probably wounded.

BATO
No. It's been separated from the pack.

They listen to the solitary HOWL.

BATO (cont'd)
I understand that pain -- it's how I felt when the Water Tribe warriors had to leave me behind. They were my family, and being apart from them was more painful than my wounds.

Sokka stops, and looks back down the path. We hear the LONELY HOWL again, which continues over...

SOKKA'S MEMORY

Young Sokka (still in wolf make-up) watches from the shore as the Water Tribe boats sail into the distance.

BACK TO SCENE

The howl fades.

KATARA
Sokka?

Sokka looks to his sister and settles his mind.

SOKKA
We need to go back to.
(beat)
I want to see Dad but... helping Aang is where we're needed the most.

KATARA
You're right.

Katara nods and Bato smiles at the kids.

BATO
Your father will understand -- and I know he's proud of you.

SOKKA
Thanks, Bato.

Bato holds out the crumpled map.

BATO
I know where to go from here. Take this in case you want to find us -- I'll leave a message at the rendezvous point.

He pulls the kids into a bear hug. Wolf howls fill the air all around them. Bato turns and trots up the path. Sokka and Katara turn back toward the abbey.

EXT. WATER TRIBE SHIP - DAY

Aang tightens Appa's reigns.

AANG
Looks like we're going alone, guys.

Momo's ears prick up at a SLOSHING from around the boat. Aang sees the Superior wading through the tide with her hem in her hands. She's winded.

SUPERIOR
Avatar! You must leave!

AANG
Okay, I get it -- everybody wants me gone.

SUPERIOR
A group of people came to the abbey looking for you.

AANG
Who?

SUPERIOR
A fierce looking woman with a horrible monster, and a young man with a scar.

AANG
Zuko.

SUPERIOR
The beast was using the scent of a necklace to follow you.

AANG
(puzzled)
A necklace?
(realizing)
Katara!

Panic crosses his face.

EXT. WOODED PATH - DAY

Sokka and Katara near the edge of the forest. The abbey lies just beyond the line of trees. There's a sputtering SNORT and the kids step back as the Shirshu leaps across their path!

SHIRSHU'S POV

The beast's senses are ignited by the blazing orange visage of Katara herself.

EXT. WOODED PATH - DAY

Zuko hops down from the beast. The Shirshu strains at its reins to get at Katara -- June can barely hold it back.

JUNE
So this is your girlfriend?
(sizing up Katara)
No wonder she left, she's way too pretty for you.

Zuko looks around, perplexed.

ZUKO
Where is he? Where’s the Avatar?

SOKKA
We split up. He’s long gone.

ZUKO
How stupid do you think I am?

SOKKA
Pretty stupid.

As Zuko speaks, Katara sees her necklace in Zuko’s hand.

She grabs for her necklace. Zuko knocks her hand away and Sokka moves in. He tackles the prince -- holding Zuko’s lethal hands away.

Katara moves to help her brother and is lassoed by the wrangler. Katara loops the rope around the Shirshu’s lashing tail. Its strength pulls June out of the saddle.

Katara and Sokka turn to run, but both of them are hit with the darting tongue of the Shirshu. They take a couple of stumbling steps forward, but the toxins quickly bring them down.

June steers the Shirshu over its victims. She CLICKS a command and the monster sniffs around them.

ZUKO
What are we supposed to do now?

JUNE
It’s seeking a different scent. Perhaps something that the Avatar held.

The Shirshu pushes the map from Sokka’s shirt and inhales.

SHIRSHU’S POV

The world is again a vast splash of shimmering flecks. Now the map is a blaze of blue: Aang’s color-scent. The Shirshu’s snout seeks out slight flashes of blue to follow.

EXT. ABBEY - DAY

The sisters scatter as the eager Shirshu bursts through the Abbey gates again. Sokka and Katara are tied up and strapped on, still groggy. The beast follows its writhing snout in a tightening circle around the courtyard.

ZUKO
What's it doing? It's just going in a circle.

SHIRSHU'S POV

Flecks of blue dance in front of the creature. They seem to spin from over the Shirshu's head.

EXT. ABBEY COURTYARD - DAY

Suddenly, the Shirshu rears up on its hind legs, dumping all aboard. They look up to see the Avatar plunging directly downward at them, on his glider. Aang buzzes its head, and the creature's snout follows so closely it topples over on its back.

KATARA
Aang!

The Shirshu hops back up and turns toward Aang as June remounts the beast. It reels back to expel its tongue and - SLAM! Appa flies into frame, head-butting the monster. June and the Shirshu crumple against a wall, unconscious.

JUNE
Come on, get up!

Zuko and the Avatar square off.

Aang hurls a massive air offensive at Zuko, which knocks him off his feet. Zuko quickly regains his footing and punches a fireball back. Aang deflects it with an air shield.

Zuko and Aang exchange bending blows until Zuko backs Aang up against a well. With the Avatar pinned against the wall of the well, Zuko delivers a vicious volley of flame.

Aang back-flips away from the fireball, diving into the well.

Zuko runs to the well and pokes his head over the top to blast at Aang again when -- WHAM! Aang flies out, riding a wave of water which douses Zuko's flames and knocks him down. Zuko is momentarily stunned.

They begin fighting again.

At the edge of the courtyard, Uncle gently pats June on the face to bring her around. She opens her eyes and he smiles at her. June smiles back -- then her face turns to a scowl.

She uses Uncle to get to her feet. Then she goes to her Shirshu and starts shaking it, trying to rouse it.

Sokka wiggles his fingers.

SOKKA
I’m starting to get some feeling back.

Something crashes next to him.

SOKKA (cont’d)
Ow.

Zuko and Aang continue their duel around the courtyard. Aang sees a glint from Zuko’s belt: Katara’s necklace. Aang zips in right behind Zuko.

AANG
You’ve got something I want.

As he grabs for the necklace, Zuko whirls around. He and Aang direct bending moves at each other at close range -- as their energies collide, the resulting blast sends them to opposite ends of the courtyard.

As Zuko takes a stance for another strike his aim is blocked by the Shirshu, who charges after Appa with June in the saddle. Before Appa can ram the Shirshu again, it hits him with its toxic tongue. Appa reels, but is able to shake off some of the effect.

Meanwhile, Zuko and Aang continue to exchange blows. Zuko launches an unrelenting barrage of fiery attacks -- Aang deftly avoids or deflects each move. Then turns and sends a huge air blast at Zuko, knocking him off his feet.

Appa circles, and makes another pass at the Shirshu. The Shirshu lands another direct hit with his tongue, and this time Appa hits the ground. The Shirshu lunges toward Appa, but the bison struggles to its feet and snaps its jaws at the Shirshu which cowers backward. The Shirshu launches another tongue attack -- Appa can no longer resist the toxin, and slumps over near Sokka and Katara, who are just coming around.

June turns the Shirshu toward Aang, and the monster strikes at him with its tongue. At the same time, Zuko Firebends at Aang. With two opponents, Aang is really on the run. He barely manages to dodge both flames and tongue, ducking and diving, using his Airbending only for defense. They’ve got him on the ropes.

On the sidelines Katara and Sokka drag themselves out of harm's way. The Superior runs over to tend to them, waving aromatic oils under their noses. As he comes around, Sokka watches as the Shirshu sniffs to find Aang's scent every time Aang moves. He looks at the Superior's oils and gets an idea.

SOKKA
That thing sees with its nose. Let's give him something to look at.

SUPERIOR
The perfume?

Sokka smiles.

Aang keeps dueling Zuko and the Shirshu. As the Shirshu strikes, Aang Airbends one of Zuko's fireballs into the monster's tongue. The Shirshu lets out a HOWL.

However, flames and tongue keep hitting closer and closer as Aang grows tired.

As they fight, Sokka, Katara, and the nuns roll out giant casks of perfume. Sokka bashes open the casks with his club, sending perfume everywhere. Katara bends the liquid into a swirling hurricane of SCENT!

SHIRSHU'S POV

Aang is in the creature's sights -- a blazing blue target. Suddenly, with a WHOOSH of liquid, the Shirshu's senses are flooded with a melange of color.

EXT. ABBEY COURTYARD - DAY

The Shirshu is in the eye of Katara's Perfumicane. The fumes fill the air of the courtyard and Sokka and Katara cough.

Zuko staggers back and Aang Waterbends a couple of blasts out of the Perfumicane into Zuko's face.

But the Shirshu is most affected. Its snout thrashes and jolts, trying to shake the smell. When that fails its tongue wildly darts in and out to defend itself. Zuko is the first hit. He stumbles and goes down in front of Aang. June rushes to calm her creature. She's also hit by the tongue.

UNCLE
June! NOOOOOO!

Too late. Uncle catches her, and they fall over in a heap.

The Shirshu, in a blind psychotic rage, tears off into the woods.

The battle is over. Zuko lies collapsed on the ground near June and Uncle (still in a heap).

ZUKO
Uncle? I didn't see you get hit with the tongue.

Uncle discretely moves his finger to his lips so that June doesn't see.

UNCLE
Shhh.

Meanwhile, Appa takes off with our heroes.

EXT. SKY - ON APPA - LATER

Aang steers Appa as Sokka and Katara rest in the saddle.

AANG
So... where do we go?

KATARA
(smiles)
We're getting you to the North Pole.

SOKKA
Yeah. We've lost too much time as it is.

Aang is taken aback.

AANG
Don't you want to see your father?

SOKKA
Of course we do, Aang. But you're our family too. And right now, you need us more.

KATARA
And we need you.

They ride in silence for a beat.

AANG
I wish I could give you a little piece of home, Katara. Something to remind you...

KATARA
I'll be okay.

AANG
Still, just a little trinket.
Maybe something like -- this?

Aang holds out Katara's necklace and her eyes go wide.

KATARA
Aang! How'd you get that?

She takes the necklace from him.

AANG
Zuko asked me to be sure I got it
to you.

Katara puts it around her neck.

KATARA
Oh, that's so sweet of Zuko. Would
you give him a kiss for me when you
see him?

AANG
Sure.

Katara kisses Aang on the cheek and he blushes. Appa disappears through the clouds.

THE END